By Express Mail. 1855

PAID

Edward Bradford, Esq.

Sup. Br. Mint

New Orleans

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Mint of the United States,
April 8th, 1839.

Sir,

In a letter from Mr. Tyler, of the 29th ult., he asks me to give my views as to the "direct intercourse or control, on the part of the Superintendent, of the men employed in a department, either as to their selection, engagement, or dismissal; also as to the admission of visiters!" In a post-script you state that you "concur with Mr. Tyler in asking my views on the matters stated".

To this joint application, I answer cheerfully, because I think it important that the exact relations between the officers & the men should be well understood by all the parties, and because, moreover, there seems to me to be no difficulty in defining these relations, — no such difficulty, at least, occurs at this Mint.

In the first place, then, I consider a Superintendent of a Branch Mint as occupying exactly the same position as to its interior government, as the Director occupies in the principal Mint. He is its President. To him is expressly committed, by law, the engaging and employing of the workmen, and, as a consequence of this power, it is he alone who

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can dismiss them. So far there can be no question as to rights and authority.

But now, as to the mode of exercising these rights, we must have reference to expediency and custom, and both these are adverse to the direct interference of the Chief Officer of the Mint. The immediate responsibility of each department is with the officer at the head of that department, and he must therefore have the immediate command of his men, and all orders to them should come either immediately from him, or from the Superintendent, through him. Such has been the invaried course at this Mint, and such, you know, is the course always pursued in the army & navy.

As to the employment of new hands, though this is legally and formally done by the Superintendent, the selection should be really made by the officer, who recommends his candidate to the Superintendent. If the selection shall appear to be a proper one, the man is employed; if not the officer is asked to name another.

If a man behave badly, the officer should report him to the Superintendent for dismissal, and, if the reasons are deemed sufficient, the man is accordingly dismissed by the Superintendent.

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As to the question of visiters, the custom here is for the head of a department when, for any sufficient cause, he wishes visiters to be excluded, to apply to the Chief Officer to have this order given, and it is given as a matter of course, and is adhered to unless some special case may be presented requiring that an exception be made. — If the Superintendent is not in the Mint, the Officer gives, himself, the order to the door-keepers.

I am sure that both you and Mr. Tyler will see the reasonableness of these views and customs as to the relative powers and actions of the Superintendent and the other officers of the Mint.

Very respectfully,
Your faithful Servant,
R. M. Patterson,
Director.

To/
David Bradford, Esq.,
Supt. Br. Mint,
New-Orleans.